

MANUALS OF FAITH AND DUTY  
NO. 2.

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JESUS THE CHRIST.

REV. STEPHEN CRANE D. D.

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# Manuals of Faith and Duty.

EDITED BY REV. J. S. CANTWELL, D.D.

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A SERIES of short books in exposition of prominent teachings of the UNIVERSALIST CHURCH, and the moral and religious obligations of believers. They are prepared by writers selected for their ability to present in brief compass an instructive and helpful Manual on the subject undertaken. The volumes will be affirmative and constructive in statement, avoiding controversy, while specifically unfolding doctrines. The series is designed to meet the wants of inquirers interested in particular points of the Universalist Faith and to help those who are already believers.

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Manuals of Faith and Duty.

No. II.

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# JESUS THE CHRIST.

BY

REV. STEPHEN CRANE, D.D.

"THOU ART THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD."

Matthew xvi. 16.

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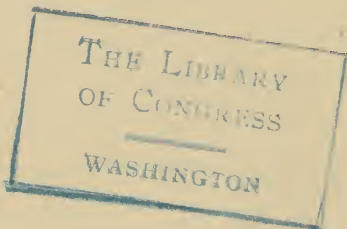
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Jesus Christ, the final proof of God with us and for us,—such are the elemental realities upon which our souls should rest. He who stands upon these divine facts in the creation and history shall not be confounded.

NEWMAN SMYTH.

## JESUS THE CHRIST.

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THE limits of this little book will permit no exhaustive discussion of the subject of which it treats. Of necessity some things must be omitted which it might be desirable and helpful to consider. There is no room for any negative work. We can take no space to refute doctrines that we do not accept. What we do not teach concerning the subject must be largely inferred from what we do teach.

Neither is there any room to set forth the historical development of the doctrine of Christ. However interesting and profitable this might be, we have no room for the work. What the Church has held concerning Christ, and how the doctrine of Christ has formulated itself through the ages, must be left untouched.

The question of the pre-existence of Christ must also be passed over. However interesting

and important this question may be, the limits of this volume will not allow us to enter upon its discussion. In fact, our choice here agrees very well with the necessity. We have no particular desire to discuss this question, for we apprehend that the real Christology of the New Testament can be unfolded without it. What Christ was in this world, in the life of humanity, is the thing of transcendent importance, and not what He was before He came into this world, whether a realized consciousness or a Divine idea. This can be ascertained and set forth very satisfactorily without any reference to His pre-existence.

Our endeavor, therefore, will be to unfold the doctrine of Christ as it appears in His life and teachings, and in the record of the Apostles. We shall try to go at once to the heart of the matter, and grasp the real significance of "The Son of God," and "The Son of Man," ascertaining what He really was in His relation to both God and man. By developing a true and positive Christology, we hope to set aside that which is not true, and give a helpful and saving knowledge of our Lord and Master. How well we shall succeed the following pages must determine.

## I. — THE TITLE OF THE BOOK. — THE GREEK ARTICLE.

That we have chosen “Jesus the Christ,” for our title rather than “Jesus Christ,” is little more, perhaps, than a matter of taste. We have chosen it because we like it better, and not because we attach any great significance to the article. In our English versions it is sometimes found before the word “Christ,” and sometimes not. The same is true in the original. The Old Version, however, does not always translate the article where it is found before “Christ” in the Greek, while the New Version, we believe, always does.

It is not always easy to determine the exact force of the Greek article. It is used where the idiom of our language does not require it. It is often used before proper names, though frequently it is not so used, when the reason of its insertion or omission is not easy to discover, though probably such a reason exists. About all we can see in the New Testament that seems like a rule governing its use, when applied to Christ, is that when “Christ” is merely a proper name, the name of the personal Jesus, or when

it is an appellative of Jesus used to make more certain who is meant, but really meaning no more than "Jesus," the article is not used. When it means something additional, the article *is* used.

Thus in the first verse of Matthew's Gospel, where we read, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ," and further on in the same chapter, where we read, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise," there is no article before "Christ" in the Greek. But when Herod asks, "Where Christ should be born,"<sup>1</sup> the article is in the Greek, and the New Version translates, "Where *the* Christ should be born." So when Peter makes his confession, "Thou art the Christ,"<sup>2</sup> the article is in the Greek, and both Versions translate it.

That this rule will hold good in all cases, we will not affirm; but it seems to give some reliable clew to the way in which the article is used. When "Christ" means something more than the personal Jesus, the article is used, and used evidently to indicate or define that something more. When the thought in the mind of the writer is of a particular designation, — of a

<sup>1</sup> Matthew ii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. xvi. 16.



specific Christ, — then he uses the article ; when it is not, he does not use it.

A little attention to the meaning of the names applied to the Saviour in our title will bring this matter out and show all the significance which we desire to claim for the Greek article when applied to Christ. “Jesus” is the Greek form of the Hebrew “Joshua,” and means “Saviour.” “Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.”<sup>1</sup> It was conferred upon Him at His presentation in the temple, and is His real, proper, personal name. It designates Him as an individual, the same as Peter or John.

## II. — SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORD “CHRIST.”

*Christos* (Christ) is from a Greek root that means “to rub on lightly or anoint,” and so means, primarily, “anointed.” It has the same signification as the Hebrew “Messiah,” and is used to translate that word into Greek. It was customary to anoint kings and priests with oil when they were inducted into office. So “the anointed” came to signify one consecrated or set apart to some sacred office or work. The

<sup>1</sup> Matthew i. 21.

anointed of God meant one specially set apart to do the work of God. Hence "Messiah" signified one specially consecrated to do the will of God, and "Christ" (*Christos*) had the same signification.

As applied to Jesus, therefore, it means the anointed or consecrated one, and points to Him as the Hebrew Messiah. To define Him as such, the sacred writers frequently, if not always, place the article before "Christ." They write "*the* Christ," or "Jesus *the* Christ," to indicate that they are speaking of a particular Christ, of the anointed of God, of "the one that should come," — that is, of the expected Messiah.

"Christ," therefore, means something more than the personal Jesus. It signifies His official, rather than His personal character, as "president" in our country signifies the office, and not the man. Of course, strictly speaking, in the last analysis, there is no distinction between the office and the man; the man *is* the office. What the man is, determines what he does; his official acts are but the outflow of his being. As Dorner says: "The office and the person intertwine in Him;"<sup>1</sup> and Mulford:

<sup>1</sup> Systematic Theology, vol. iii. p. 379.

“His own person was the temple in which God would meet man, and man might meet God.”<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the distinction exists in thought, and is helpful to a right understanding of the Gospel.

It is quite evident that this distinction existed in the thought of the New Testament writers, at least in the beginning, and they indicate it when they call Jesus *the* Christ. By this name they designate His official character, and claim that He was “*The Anointed One*,” the Hebrew Messiah; though after a time the person and the office became so blended in their thought, it is likely, that they used the word “Christ” to signify the person as well as the office, and then they sometimes dropped the article.

The distinction between the names “Jesus” and “Christ” is well expressed by Archdeacon Farrar. “The Hebrew Messiah,” he says, “and the Greek Christ were names which represented His office as the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King, but Jesus was the personal name He bore as one who ‘emptied Himself of His glory’ to become a ‘sinless man among men.’”<sup>2</sup> Abating whatever of a Trinitarian sense they may have had

<sup>1</sup> Republic of God, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Life of Christ, p. 9.

in the mind of the writer, these words clearly set forth the distinction between the two names under consideration.

Our title, then, sets forth the real subject-matter of the book. We are to write of "Jesus *the* Christ;" not of the earthly life of Jesus, but of that in Jesus that constituted Him *the* Christ, the sent of God, the anointed of the Most High. In other words, we are to unfold the Christ of Christianity, the historical Christ, the Christ that is placed before us on the pages of the New Testament.

To us there is no other Christ. We have no knowledge of any Christ before or outside of Christianity. To speak of the Christ, or "the Christos," that existed before Christ, or that exists now where Christ is not known, is to us to affirm as a fact that which is not a fact. It is to talk of the sweetness of the rose without the rose. Unquestionably there was an "ideal Christ," or rather an idea of Christ, before the advent of Jesus; but it was not Christ, any more than an idea of a world is a world. Without question there is some of the truth and love of Christ in other religions; but they are not *the* Christ, any more than the

fragrance of the rose is the rose, or the materials of a temple are the temple. The Christ of the New Testament is not an ideal, but *an ideal realized*. It is God's idea of the Christ absolutely lived. Christ is not truth in the abstract, but "truth in the concrete;" it is truth realized, embodied, and lived. It is the Spirit of God put into and filling full an actual life. There is no such Christ as this in the other religions; and to dignify so much of the truth and spirit of Christ as are found in other religions as "the Christos," is to turn men away from the "Sun of Righteousness," and set them to following a rush-light.

It is not necessary to deny any good there may be in other religions in order to bring out the glory of Christianity. Still less is it necessary to exalt that good into the fulness of Christ in order to have that good appreciated. Christianity has a good that is unique, that is peculiar to itself; and while we may not say that the good of other religions is not of the same nature, it is not the good of Christianity, any more than the sour crab is the luscious greening, or the twilight of early morning the brightness of noonday.

Nothing is likely to be more misleading, therefore, than the teaching that "the Christos" "is

something different from and larger in significance than the historic Christ," or "wider in its reign than historic Christianity, or older than its manifestation in Jesus."<sup>1</sup> There is no "Christos" save as the truth and love, spirit and purpose of God were realized in Jesus. There are truth and love, spirit and purpose, but these do not constitute the Christ until they are organized into a perfect life, any more than the elements of the human body constitute a living organism without being organized into life. Jesus is the organic truth of God, the Divine Life realized. It is this that constituted Him "the Christ." Hence outside of Him there is no Christ.

Even if we dignify the good there is in other religions as "the Christos," it is not larger or "wider in its reign" than the historic Christ, unless a part is greater than the whole. "The Christos" outside of Christianity is confessedly only a fragment of the real Christ. No matter, therefore, how wide its reign, it is only the reign of a fragment, and not the reign of Christ.

We dismiss, therefore, all this notion of "the Christos" that is something more and larger

<sup>1</sup> Sermon by Dr. H. W. Thomas, on "The Essential Christ."



than historic Christianity, without further comment. It is but the revival of an old idea that never had any foundation in reality. The real Christ is found nowhere save in Christianity. Hence His reign is commensurate with the reign of Christianity. He goes where historic Christianity goes, for He is in all of His fulness the Christianity of which the New Testament is the record. Our study then verily is not of any imaginary "Christos" that was before, and is now, outside of Christianity, but of the Christ of the New Testament,—even of "Jesus *the* Christ."

### III. — EXPLANATION OF IMPORTANT TERMS.

We shall have occasion to use some terms in this book that it may be well to explain at the outset. We shall speak of the nature and of the character of Christ. It will be helpful, therefore, to define these terms clearly, and make plain the sense in which we use them.

The nature of anything is what it is by creation. It is its inherent powers, those that belong to it as a being, that constitute it what it is. The word is from *nascor*, "to be born." Hence, the nature of anything is what it is by birth, by

creation. Character is what is wrought into or upon anything. The word comes from a Greek root, that means "to cut into furrows or engrave." Hence, character is that which is cut into or engraved upon the nature. In other words, it is that which is produced by the development, cultivation, or training of the nature. It is not the nature, but the product of the nature under any given environment; under any specified conditions of development and culture.

For instance, it is the nature of an apple-tree to bear apples, not to bear peaches or plums. Its inherent powers are such that apples are its native product. Its character depends on the kind and quantity of the fruit produced. If it produces an abundance of good fruit, it is a good tree; if a small quantity of poor fruit, it is a poor tree. The character of the tree is known by the quantity and quality of its fruit; its nature by the kind of fruit it bears. If it bears apples it is an apple-tree, whatever be the amount or quality of its fruit.

So the nature of man is what man is by creation; his character is what he has become by cultivation. His character, therefore, may be good or bad, but his nature is ever the same.



Indeed, to change his nature would be to destroy his humanity ; that is, he would cease to be a man. This is sufficient, we trust, to make clear the meaning of these two words, and show the relation of one to the other. Nature is the product of the Creative Energy ; character is the product of this nature, under whatsoever circumstances or environment it may be developed.

It will be helpful also to come to a clear understanding of the terms "son" and "child," as used in the Scriptures. Christ is frequently called the "Son of God," or "Son of man." It is important, therefore, to have some definite idea of the term "son," as thus used. In Bible language the son or child of anything signifies, in a general way, a likeness to that thing. It is an expression that always conveys the idea of likeness, near or remote. It does not always signify natural kinship, but it always signifies resemblance. One thing is not said to be the child or son of another unless there is some resemblance between the two.

Thus, "children of God" are Godlike children ; "children of the devil" are devilish or wicked children ; "sons of thunder" are eloquent or powerful speakers, — that is, "thunderous"

sons ; “children of light” are spiritually illuminated children ; “children of this world ” are worldly children ; “children of disobedience” are disobedient children ; “children of Abraham” are like Abraham, full of faith. So in all cases. The child or son of anything is one that in some respects resembles that thing. Indeed, relation always implies resemblance. One thing can have no relation to another unless it resembles that other.

“The Son of God,” therefore, is one who is like God. It does not necessarily imply that God is his creator, — though this, of course, is included when we read that man or Christ is the son or child of God, — but it does imply that he is like God in some respect, — in what respect is to be determined (but the relation given in the expression implies that in *some* respect he is like God).

So “the Son of man” means one who is like man, or like a man. It does not necessarily mean that he is a man, but it does necessarily mean that he is like man in some respects. Doubtless the phrase, “the son of man,” or “the children of men,” frequently means man or men ; but it does not necessarily mean this. It neces-

sarily means a likeness to man or men, but not necessarily man or men. If we hold that the son of anything is synonymous with that thing, then we should have to hold that "sons of thunder" were literally thunder. "The Son of man," therefore, does not necessarily mean man or a man, but one who is like man in some respect,—in what respect must be determined,—but in some respect is necessitated by the relation given.

#### IV. — THE "LOGOS" OR "WORD."

The term "Logos," translated "Word," ought also to receive some explanation. There is no question as to the literal meaning of this term. It literally means "word," "saying," "speech," the outward form of the inward thought; and sometimes covers both the inward thought and outward form or image. Hence it enters into composition as the discourse, theory, or doctrine of anything. Thus "Christology" is the discourse, theory, or doctrine of Christ. "Theology" is the discourse, theory, or doctrine of God.

Saint John seems to use this term in a special or technical sense. Thus he opens his Gospel by saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was

God.”<sup>1</sup> And further on he says, “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”<sup>2</sup> What can be the meaning of this term here? Different answers are given. Some maintain that by the “Word” is meant God Himself, the Self-existent and Eternal One; and hence that this One, the Infinite God, “was made flesh,” — that is, became the “man Christ Jesus,” so that Christ is really God in human form, or the “God-man.”

Others hold that the word “Logos” does not mean “God,” but the power, wisdom, reason, or creative energy of God; and hence that this power, wisdom, reason, or creative energy of God “was made flesh,” — that is, became a man, and constituted the man “the Christ,” the Son of God and Saviour of the world. John has in mind, it is claimed, the Gnostic heresies of his time, and attempts to so state the truth as to refute those heresies. Among those heresies or false doctrines there was one, that the world was not made by the Supreme God, but by an inferior being called the “Logos.” To refute this, John asserts that the Logos, or Creative Energy, was none other than God Himself; and that by this

<sup>1</sup> John i. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 14.

energy, that is, by God Himself, were all things made. Then to refute another heresy, — that the body of Christ was not real, but only an appearance, — he asserts that this Creative Energy became flesh, entered into and possessed a real man, who dwelt among them as such.

Of these two answers, the latter, we apprehend, comes much nearer the truth than the former ; still we think that the real thought of the Apostle can be brought out more clearly, if we give the term “ Word ” more of its primary and literal signification, and less of the special and technical one.

Now a word is the expression of an idea, the outward form of the inward thought. It is an effort to objectify the subjective, to photograph the inward state. It is therefore a picture addressed to the ear, as the image of anything is a picture addressed to the eye. If it be a true word, if it accurately represent the inward state of the speaker, all there is of him goes into it. His thought, feeling, will, in a certain sense his very personality, his very being, as it were, projects itself into the word, so that it becomes a perfect picture, a complete representation of all he is.

Give this meaning to the term "Word," and we get, we apprehend, just the thought that John wished to express. It is that Christ is the true word of God, representing to us all that God is; revealing the inward state of the Infinite, His absolute thought, feeling, will. "The Word was made flesh;" that is, the thought, feeling, and will of God so entered into, filled, and empowered the man Christ Jesus, that He became the perfect representative of God.

We shall have occasion to bring out this thought quite fully in these pages. We introduce it here that we may get before us the meaning of the term "Word," when applied to Christ. It really has its original and primary meaning. It really means "WORD." Professor Swing hints the truth in a recent sermon. "When John declared Christ to be the Word," he says, "he may have meant that He was the summing-up of the will of God toward man, the full utterance and full eloquence of the sky, . . . the term that was in the beginning with God, the picture of that supreme thought."

Prebendary Griffith develops this idea more fully: "The meaning of the term has been hit by Goethe, when he renders it, 'In the beginning



was the Act,' for Word constitutes the passage from the inward Devising to the outward Doing. In human experience our word is the middle term between purpose and performance. Hence, by a just analogy the Word of God is the utterance (that is, outurance) of the will of God, and thus the commencement of the work of God, translating His invisible subjectivity into visible objectivity. The comparison is so natural, that we find it in the Vedas : 'The word of Brahm has begotten all things;' and in the Zend, where Honover (the word) is the author of creation. And in Persia the Prime Minister, the acting representative of the secluded monarch, was called 'the Word of the King.'"<sup>1</sup>

These quotations enable us to see that the term "Word," when applied to Christ, really has very much of its original and primary signification. Christ is the utterance of the Divine thought, feeling, and will. Other terms that we may have occasion to use will require no special explanation.

#### V. — OPINIONS CONCERNING CHRIST.

Extreme views prevail concerning Christ. On one side is the high Trinitarian view, which iden-

<sup>1</sup> Gospel of the Divine Life, p. 10.

tifies Christ with the absolute God. According to this view Christ possessed two natures,—one human and the other divine,—but so united as to form one person, and that person the absolute Deity.

On the other side is the extreme humanitarian view. According to this view Christ was a man and nothing more. He had no superiority over other men, unless He may be regarded as a religious genius. As some men have a genius for science or art, so Christ had a genius for religion and the gospel, so much of it as belongs to Him is the product of that genius. He wrought no miracles, and possessed no supernatural wisdom or power. He was in no special sense “the sent” of God, or Saviour of the world. He was merely a religious reformer, like Luther or Wesley, teaching much truth, but some error; and is not to be implicitly followed. He has no authority over faith and life, any more than any other wise and good man. He is not *the* Christ, the Guide and Saviour, but only one among many guides, a saviour among many saviours.

Such are the extreme views which exist concerning Christ. One exalts Christ to the very supreme God; the other humbles Him to the



rank of mere man ; and between the two the Christian world oscillates. Men swing from one extreme to the other. If one comes to the conclusion that Christ is not God, he is very likely to conclude that He is only a man. If he rejects the Trinitarian view, he is quite likely to swing over to the humanitarian. On the other hand, if he cannot bring himself to believe that Christ is a man, and nothing more, he is very likely to take the opposite extreme, and affirm His absolute Deity.

The negative style of argument prevails on either side. Prove that Christ is not God, and we are supposed to have proved that He is a man and nothing more. Prove that He is not a *mere* man, and you are supposed to have proved that He is God. It does not seem to occur to people that between God and man there is a long way ; that between the finite and the infinite there is a vast distance ; and that Christ may be something unique, neither absolutely God nor absolutely man, but *sui generis*, — a being after his own order, a “mediator between God and man.” Surely there is room enough for such a being.

It is well to observe that an extreme seldom

or never contains the whole truth. Its vision of the truth is usually one-sided and distorted. While it contains some truth, it will contain also some error; and its opposite will contain some truth and some error. Only by some process of elimination and combination, therefore, can the whole or the essential truth be seen in cases where these extreme views prevail. The truth in each must be separated from the error, and a higher unity be found, in which the truths thus separated, or the different sides of the truth thus seen, will combine and form the whole or the essential truth.

In the case of Christ it is very clear that there is truth in both of these extreme views. The Scriptures present this two-sided view of the Saviour. They make it clear that He was a man; that He had a human body, and a human mind, or at least a mind that is governed by the same laws and acts just as a human mind acts; that He lived and walked and talked among men as a man. Of this there can be no question. It is the clearest of all facts that Christ was a man, and not merely the semblance of a man. Whatever more He may have been, He was clearly and emphatically a man. He was "the Son of man," whatever else He may have been. The

likeness between Him and man was so complete that He unquestionably belonged to the human species.

On the other hand, the Scriptures make it equally clear that He was no *ordinary* man; that He was something more than empirical man; that He rose far above man as experience shows man to us, as man appears on the pages of history. No one candidly reading the New Testament can fail, it would seem, to be impressed with this fact. The being presented therein is not a *mere* man. He is something more than that; there is something Divine about Him. In some way He rises above the race to which He somehow clearly belongs, and takes a place that is unique, that belongs to Him alone. The whole trend of the Christian Scriptures runs in this direction. The titles given to Him, the way He is spoken of, the impression He made upon His contemporaries, the works which He did, and the way in which He taught,—in fine, the whole scope of the record we have of His life and character and teachings carries with it the conviction that He was superhuman; that He possessed a Divine element or quality not found in empirical man; that He bore a likeness to God

that was peculiar to Himself, shared in as yet by no other human being. This the record makes very certain. It is just as certain that He was something more than *mere* man as it is that He was a man. He was just as certainly "the Son of God" as "the Son of man."

Here, then, we have the two sides of the New Testament picture of *the* Christ. Here are the essential truths contained in these extreme views. How shall we unite them so as to form a consistent whole? How shall we grasp both sides of this picture so as to get before us a perfect likeness of our Master? This has been the question of the ages. This is the problem with which the Church has grappled through almost its whole history. Wellnigh from the beginning until now the Church has essayed to solve this problem, to bring into a harmonious whole the Divine and human elements in Christ; to show how Christ is, and was, both "the Son of man" and "the Son of God." That we shall solve this problem to our own or the world's satisfaction is not to be hoped. Still, an effort in this direction is necessary in any work on Christology; and every effort, it may be, brings us a little nearer the truth.

Let us begin, then, by inquiring, Why is this a problem? What makes it a problem? Why has it been found so difficult to unite the human and Divine in Christ? What has so separated the human and Divine that to unite them in Christ has become such a herculean task? Evidently, it is a certain doctrine concerning human nature. Certain ideas concerning man have caused this to be so great a problem. Man has been completely separated from God; a great gulf has been created between the two. The child has been utterly divorced from the Father. Human nature has been held to be totally corrupt; man is totally depraved. Hence he is at the opposite pole from God; they have nothing in common; they are radically unlike, absolutely no relation exists between them. Hence the problem, to unite them in Christ. How can this great gulf be bridged? How can two natures so radically unlike be united in one being? How can a totally depraved nature be united to an infinitely holy nature? How can Christ partake, at the same time, of a nature wholly corrupt and of one absolutely pure? How can He bring together and unite two things that are separated by "the whole diameter of the

universe"? How can He marry the oil and the water?

This is the problem with which the Church has been struggling for ages. To solve this problem has been the task of all Christology. That it never has been solved is not surprising, for the solution is a philosophical impossibility. Given the problem as stated, and the solution is not in the region of possibility. You may as well undertake to square the circle. Given a nature in man totally depraved, utterly unlike the nature of God, and you can never give them a rational union in Christ. Christ can never unite into one harmonious whole such absolute opposites. The problem to be solved, therefore, must be differently stated. That which makes it unsolvable must be examined. Human nature must have a rehearing. We must see if human nature is so radically different from the Divine; we must see if there is not a close resemblance between the two. We proceed to inquire into the real nature of man.

## VI. — HUMAN NATURE.

We have seen that the nature of anything is what it is by creation. The nature of man



therefore is what *he* is by creation. How then was man created? What was his nature in the beginning? "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him."<sup>1</sup> This is an explicit and definite answer to our question. Man was created in the image of God; therefore, in nature, man is like God and God is like man. The relation between them is one of mutual resemblance, — the relation of father and child.

There are two ways in which this truth is sought to be set aside or made of no real significance. One is the way of theology; the other the way of philosophy. Theology seeks to set aside this truth by affirming that the image of God in man was destroyed by sin. It admits that man was created in the image of God; but it holds, or has held, that sin destroyed that image. Man sinned, and with that sin disappeared his original likeness to God. Hence the great difficulty of seeing in Christ both Divine and human nature, since there is no longer any relation between them. To remove this difficulty, therefore, it must be seen that this relation is not lost; that sin does not destroy the Divine image in man.

<sup>1</sup> Genesis i. 27.

That it does not is evidenced by the fact that, if it did, man would cease to be man. Confessedly it is this image of God in man that constitutes his manhood, that makes him man. God created the other animals, but He did not create them in His own image; therefore they are not man, they are not of the *genus homo*. He created man in His own image, therefore he is man. Hence, if sin has destroyed that image, man has ceased to be. The being we call man is not man. The wreck and ruin of man he may be, but man he is not.

But further, ceasing to be man he has ceased to be accountable to God as man. He is no longer under any obligations to love and obey God. He has fallen out of the category of accountable beings. Having lost the Divine likeness, he is no longer the child of God; and ceasing to be a child of God, God has ceased to have any claim to his love and obedience. As well ask a stick or a stone to love and obey God, as to ask man after you have taken from him that moral likeness to God which gives him the power to love and obey.

Such being the fatal consequences of setting



aside this great truth that man by nature is in the image of God, theology is modifying its doctrine. It hardly holds any longer that sin absolutely destroyed the Divine image, but only that it perverted, marred, or blackened that image. Thus Dorner says that the Scriptures "ascribe to the first pair innocence and purity indeed, but not moral indefectibility, perfection, and holiness."<sup>1</sup> The Divine image in man, therefore, not being in a primitive moral perfection or holiness, sin did not destroy that image.

Indeed, the Scriptures make it very certain that sin did not and does not destroy the Divine image in man; for long after sin entered the world, this image is made the reason and ground of the law against taking human life. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man."<sup>2</sup> Human life is to be held sacred because man is in the image of God. Besides, the fundamental doctrine of Christianity is that man is the child of God, which he cannot be unless his nature is like the Divine nature. So far as theology is

<sup>1</sup> Systematic Theology, vol. ii. p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis ix. 6.

concerned, therefore, it must be conceded that man not only was, but *is* and ever *must* be, in the image of God by nature.<sup>1</sup>

But while theology must concede this, philosophy, or a certain kind of philosophy, comes in to deny it. Very clear it is, that if man is in the image of God, God is in the image of man, and we have a very sure way of knowing something of God. By studying the image of God in man, we can know God. The picture may not be perfect, but what it tells us is of the everlasting truth.

The philosophy of "the unknowable," therefore, cannot allow that man is in any sense like God or God like man. To teach that doctrine is to fall into the great vice of anthropomorphism, of making God like man. "The infinite," we are told, "is the other than the finite." So we can only know the finite, "the conditioned." The infinite, "the unconditioned," is beyond the possibility of human knowledge.

Admit that "the infinite is the other than the finite," yet the finite must have its ground in the infinite. As Mulford says, "We cannot

<sup>1</sup> For a further discussion of this subject, see "Manuals of Faith and Duty," No. 1. — EDITOR.

deduce . . . the eternal from the temporal, nor the infinite from the finite ; and yet the temporal has its ground in the eternal, and the finite in the infinite.”<sup>1</sup> But if the finite has its ground in the infinite, then there must be some likeness between them ; for one thing cannot have its ground in another without resembling that other. The conclusion, therefore, is inevitable that “the finite has an internal and active relation to the infinite.”<sup>2</sup>

Doubtless this doctrine may be used to support a degrading anthropomorphism. When it is held that the image of God in man is in his bodily form and human limitations, a conception of Deity may grow out of it that is anything but elevating. God, then, will be anthropomorphic in a bad sense. He will be like man in his imperfection and finiteness. But it is not in this sense that man is like God or God like man.

It is the spiritual nature of man that is like God ; hence there is nothing degrading in this thought. It is no degradation of the Divine idea to say that God is the infinite pattern of the human soul. That soul is the divinest thing of

<sup>1</sup> Republic of God, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Systematic Theology, vol. i. p. 210.

which we have any knowledge. In all nature there is nothing so grand, so mysterious, so awe-inspiring as the human soul. Place it in any condition you please, and there is something about it that stirs within us the thought of God. It is an image defaced and blackened, if you will, but still an image of the Highest. The thought of God, therefore, does not go down, but up, when we claim that God is like man in his spiritual nature.

Surely this philosophy of "the unknowable" cannot say that in this sense God is not like man. It does not pretend to know what God is; how then can it know that He is not like man? How can a philosophy that professes only ignorance of God tell us what God is or is not like? Natural science may not know the relation between God and man, but there is a higher science. This relation may be unknown and unknowable to physics, and yet be known and knowable to metaphysics. Philosophy, therefore, no more than theology, can impeach the great truth of Revelation, that man by nature is in the image of God.

Let us then consider some of the characteristics of this image of God in man. Of course it

will not be thought that man is like God in His infinity; omniscience, omnipotence, self-existence, or any of the attributes that belong to Him distinctively as Deity. Man is finite; therefore the image of God in man is finite. Nevertheless it is truthful; so far as it goes it gives a correct impression of the reality. A picture need not be as large as the original to be a faithful likeness. Human nature is like the Divine, not in degree, but in kind.

1. Man is like God inasmuch as he is spirit and not matter. Man is a spirit. He has a body, but he *is* a spirit, a soul. God certainly is a spirit; therefore the relation between God and man is a spiritual relation. Man is the spiritual child of God; and God is the Father, not of all flesh, but of "the spirits of all flesh."

2. Man is like God in that he is a conscious being. Very likely Nature comes to consciousness only in man. All below him is unconscious life and unthinking force. All the ends for which Nature works are known, not to Nature, but to God. It is man's high prerogative to know, to be conscious of himself, of the world, and of God. The two great avenues of knowledge, thought and feeling, are open to him. He can

think and he can love. By the one he can know the world that God hath made, by the other he can know God; and by them both he can know himself.

3. Man is like God in that he is a moral being. Morality has its ground in freedom. Without this freedom nothing that we call morality could exist. In man God would have a moral being like Himself, therefore He gave him moral freedom like His own. Within his own sphere, therefore, man is just as free as God. Man is finite, so his freedom is finite; but it is a finite picture of the infinite perfection. When man acts morally, he acts just as God acts, not from a force without but from a power within.

4. Man is like God insomuch as he is a person. The image of God in man is the image of a Divine personality. There is much hesitancy about ascribing personality to God. Men are willing to admit that there is something — power, force, law — in the universe, but they are unwilling to ascribe personality to that something. They seem to think it belittles God to call Him a person. An impersonal Deity, they imagine, is something greater and grander than a personal Deity.



To say nothing of the impossibility of there being anything that we call God without personality, it is evident that to ascribe personality to God is not to degrade or belittle the Divine idea. Personality is the loftiest thing of which we have any knowledge. A flash of intelligence and freedom outshines the combined light of all the suns in the universe. "There is in personality the highest that is within the knowledge of man. It is the steepest, loftiest summit towards which we move in our attainment."<sup>1</sup>

Doubtless there is a difficulty in conceiving of God as a person, but this difficulty arises from mistaking the true ground of personality. We think of personality as something cut off and defined. Personality is to us the product of external limitations. Hence where these limitations are wanting, as in God, we cannot conceive of personality.

But the truth is that personality has not its ground in limitations but in consciousness; in its own intelligence, will, and freedom. I am a person, not because I am finite, but because I think my own thoughts, will my own intents; because I am an intelligent, free power, in and of my-

<sup>1</sup> Republic of God, p. 21.

self. So God is a person not because He is or is not infinite, but because He is a self-determining and self-acting power, because He is an intelligent, free will, the absolute cause of His own volitions. Such is the personality of God, and man is in the image of this Divine personality.

5. Man is like God in his *ideal* destiny. When the idea of God in man is realized it will be realized in the Divine likeness. "Man's spiritual powers and capacities bear the imprint of the Divine likeness; still, capacities and powers are not God's actual image, but merely its possibility. The higher import of the word 'image' points to the future. In what he possesses already, he is created in the Divine image as his model; but in reference to the chief matter — his destination — he has in God a norm and ideal."<sup>1</sup> This is the crowning thought of all. Man was created in the likeness of God in his capacities and powers, that he might become like God in the perfect development of those capacities and powers. He is in the image of God in nature, that he may become the image of God in character. The foundation is of holy

<sup>1</sup> Systematic Theology, vol. ii. p. 77.



materials that the superstructure may be the holiness of God.

Something of the sense in which man is in the image of God by nature, we now have before us. He is so in his spirituality, consciousness, personality, moral freedom, and ideal destiny. In one word, human nature is the Divine nature in *miniature*. In his spiritual nature man is a microcosm of Divinity. His spiritual being is a finite picture of the infinite Being.

## VII. — HUMAN CHARACTER.

But while man is in the image of God by nature, he is not in His image by character. Character, we have seen, is that which is developed out of the nature, and is the product of the good or bad use of our powers. Certain it is, then, that human character, taken as a whole or in part, as embracing all mankind or a single individual, is not in the likeness of the Divine character. The character of empirical man is almost anything but Divine. It is full of divisions, separations, antagonisms, darkness, and depravity. Empirical man is an imperfect, ignorant, sinful, and often depraved creature.

Here is the great gulf between God and man ; it is not in man's nature, but in his character. His character is a one-sided, abnormal, sinful, twisted development of his nature. His capacities and powers are used for all purposes except the right one, so his character has all kinds of immoral taints and tendencies.

Still, if these capacities and powers were developed aright, if they were unfolded in the Divine way, if they were grown into a symmetrical and perfect character, that character, it is clear, would be Divine, would be like the character of God. Human nature being in the image of God, if that nature were perfectly and harmoniously developed, the character thus formed would also be in the image of God. If the idea of God in man were once fully realized, then man's character would be a perfect development of his nature, and he would be "the Son of God" both in nature and character.

Now this idea is not realized. In empirical man "the idea and the actuality of the idea exist apart, the latter being the fruit of free acts and coming gradually into existence."<sup>1</sup> But if these two should once come together, if in one

<sup>1</sup> Systematic Theology, vol. ii. p. 80.

soul the ideal should become the actual, then that soul would be like God both in nature and character, and so a perfect representative of God.

Suppose a human soul, created as it is in the Divine image, should have a complete and perfect development, harmonious and sinless. We must always admit the possibility of this. We cannot allow that a sinful development is necessary to realize the Divine idea of man. "The possibility of a sinless development of man, in absolute harmony with His idea, must always be held fast, and at the same time the possibility of his passing through all the stages of life without fault and yet being true man. Evil can never be a part of man's nature. When it exists it is removable, conquerable, because eternally excluded from the idea of man."<sup>1</sup> That is, man does not realize the Divine idea in him by being a sinner, but by *not* being a sinner.

Suppose, then, in all ways this soul has a sinless development, full and complete. How evident it is that he would be a perfect "child of God"! He would be like God, not only in nature but in character. He would be a finite

<sup>1</sup> Systematic Theology, vol. ii. p. 74.

picture of the infinite perfection. He would represent, on a finite scale, all there is of God. He would be "the Son of God" by both nature and character.

#### VIII. — THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

From the doctrine taught concerning human nature it is easy to see that there can be no antithesis between that nature and the nature of God. These natures are not opposed to each other. There is no such great gulf between them as theology has so long taught. A true view of human nature effectually bridges this gulf, or rather completely fills it up. Human nature being in the image of the Divine nature, they in no way antagonize each other, but are in complete and perfect agreement. Their relation is one of perfect harmony.

Hence there is no difficulty in uniting them in Christ or in seeing that His nature could not have essentially differed from the nature of either God or man. If it is said that His nature was Divine, we answer, Yes, and it was human also; for the Divine nature is like human nature. If it is said that His nature was human, we

answer, Yes, and it was Divine also ; for human nature is like the Divine nature. That is to say, Christ's nature was both human and Divine, because the human and the Divine nature are essentially the same. In nature they all stand on the same plane,—all rank in the same category of being. One relation is common to them all. They all belong to one family and are bound together by a common oneness, a oneness of nature. In nature, therefore, Christ is both “the Son of God” and “the son of man.” His native capacities and powers are like the native capacities and powers of both God and man. He is a conscious, free, spiritual personality like both God and man.

He differs from either only in degree. That He differs from God in degree is evident. He is a created being, and therefore limited in all His powers. God is infinite, He is finite. His capacities and powers differ from those of God in quantity, though not in quality. He is not God, but “the Son of God.”

That He differs from man in degree is not so clear. That His capacities and powers are naturally greater than those of man is possible. A richness and fulness of nature may be claimed

for Him that do not belong to ordinary man. But this is a point difficult to determine, for we have no estimate of the richness and fulness of man's nature. The human soul is a deep that has never yet been fathomed. It has possibilities of which mankind has as yet no knowledge. "Our being is deeper than we know; it under-grounds all conscious existence."<sup>1</sup> "When we look at the genesis of thoughts, how they arise in us originally and independently, whether they be the suggestions of love or knowledge, we notice that there is in our souls a mysterious world, not made by us, with a wealth compared to which our actual productions are poverty; and although we are not masters of that wealth, still such happy moments show us what we should and could be."<sup>2</sup> Knowing so little, therefore, of the real wealth of our own souls, it is hardly worth while to speculate as to the superior wealth of the soul of Christ. Enough for us to know that His soul was essentially a human soul. He was emphatically a man, though not empirical man. His nature was really and truly human nature.

<sup>1</sup> Hedge's *Ways of the Spirit*, p. 357.

<sup>2</sup> *Systematic Theology*, vol. iii. p. 357.



It is manifest therefore how Christ was both "the Son of God" and "the son of man." He was "the Son of God" by nature and He was "the son of man" by nature. His nature was both human and Divine, for it was like the nature of both God and man, since their natures are like each other.

The character of Christ, however, was not human character. It was not the character of empirical man, not the character that experience shows man to possess. We have seen that the great difference between God and man is in character. Man's character separates him from God. He is not godlike in character. So it is man's character that separates him from Christ. Not his nature but his character separates empirical man from "the son of man."

Man's character is a one-sided, imperfect, sinful development of his nature. Christ's character is an all-sided, perfect, symmetrical, sinless development of His nature. In the space of a few years He developed a complete, Divine manhood. He was so environed by the spirit of God that in this short time He grew a sinless character that was a perfect development of His godlike nature and so a perfect moral likeness of

the Divine character. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."<sup>1</sup> He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."<sup>2</sup>

Jesus grew; He had a development. His character was not imposed upon Him, but was evolved from within Him. Like all human character, it was a growth. "In the cognitive and volitional aspect He remains in a process of development even up to His death." But it was a sinless growth: He never grew wrong; His development was without transgression. He was so guarded, guided, and helped, that His nature unfolded without sin into a complete and perfect character. In His life there were no antagonisms or contradictions. His character did not belie His nature, but was a legitimate and symmetrical development of His nature.

Hence His character separated Him from man. While like man in nature, His perfect sinless development lifted Him above man in character, — that is, above empirical man, — and constituted Him a unique being. He was a moral miracle. His special and unique development put Him outside and in advance of the

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews iv. 15.



ordinary process of human unfolding and beyond the range of ordinary human character, and constituted Him "the miraculous Child."

But while His character separated Him from man, it united Him to God. Having a Divine nature, divinely unfolded, He became a child of God after a "unique fashion." He became His child both in nature and character. He was like God not only in nature but in life and character, and so between them there was complete harmony, perfect "oneness." He thought the thoughts of God, loved the things of God, willed the purposes of God, spoke the words and did the works of God. So He is the representative of God. He is the "Emmanuel," "God with us," God on a finite scale. He holds the perfections of the Infinite within the limits of finite possibility.

At the same time He is the realization of the Divine idea of man. The ideal became actual in Him. God's idea of man came to realization first in Jesus the Christ. He first realized among men the idea of man which God had in the beginning. In Him the Divine-human image was realized in its ideal perfection. Hence He was at the same time the representative of God and the example and destiny of

man. He reveals in Himself God, Duty, Destiny. He shows us what God *is*, what man *ought* to be, and what man *is* to be.

So we understand the relation which Christ sustains to both God and man. He is "the Son of man" by nature. He is like man in nature, and will be like man both in nature and character when man shall have realized his destiny. But He is "the Son of God" both by nature and character. His Divine sonship is twofold, while His human sonship is only onefold. He is like God both in nature and character, but He is like man as yet only in nature. Blessed be the day when man shall be like Him in character!

#### IX. — CHRIST THE WORD OF GOD.

Turning to the New Testament for confirmation of these views, let us first consider the doctrine of "the Logos," "the Word." This doctrine is peculiar to John. No writer except John calls Christ distinctively "the Word." Other writers call the gospel or the teachings of Christ "the Word of God," but only John applies this term directly to the Saviour. This he does in a special manner in the introduction

of his Gospel, where he seems to teach a somewhat peculiar doctrine concerning Christ. Let us see if we can unfold it.

We have explained that the term "Word" denotes the outward form of the inward thought, and sometimes it is used to cover both the inward thought and outward expression, and that this is the real meaning of the original "Logos." That is, it may be both subjective and objective; may be a spoken and unspoken word. In both of these senses John uses it, we apprehend, in the prologue of his Gospel. He first uses it in a subjective sense.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Here the term signifies the *unspoken* word of God, that is, His thought, plan, purpose, or "world-idea." It denotes the subjective word, the creative thought or idea, in the mind of God. This word, this creative thought, was in "the beginning," — before all else, before the creative word was spoken. "The Word was with God." It belonged to Him and not to any inferior being. It was His thought or idea, and not that of another.

"And the Word was God." This creative

word or idea was not as yet separated from God, but was so much of Him and in Him, that, figuratively speaking, it may be called God, as a man's thoughts may be called the man. Or we may understand the neuter verb here as we do in the expression, "This is my body." That is, this represents or is like my body. So "the Word" represents or is like God. The creative thought or idea that possessed the mind of God was pre-eminently a Godlike idea. It was an idea not like that of man or any inferior being, but like God. Thus far the term "Word" is used in a subjective sense, to denote the creative idea in the mind of God.

But now John proceeds to show the objectification of this word, to unfold the process whereby this creative idea in the mind of God realized itself. "All things were made by it,<sup>1</sup> and without it was not anything made that was made."<sup>2</sup> The first step in the objectifying or uttering of the Divine creative idea or word

<sup>1</sup> The Greek does not demand that the term "Word" should be followed in English by the masculine pronoun. It is just as correct to translate "it" as "Him," and more consistent with the thought.

<sup>2</sup> The second verse is a repetition and adds nothing to the thought.

was in creation. All things were made by or in accordance with this creative idea or plan. Hence "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead."<sup>1</sup> God so uttered His word, His creative thought, in external Nature that God may be known by His works.

For in this objectified word, in this Divine idea in creation, "is Life, and the life is the Light of men." In this creative idea, realizing itself in the natural world, there is the life, the very energy of God; and in this life there is light for men, if they have eyes to see it. "But the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." The darkened or undeveloped mind of man did not see the Divine light in Nature; or perhaps John refers to a time when there was no created being to observe this light, man not yet having come into existence. In the next place John proceeds to state how this creative word or idea was objectified or realized in human nature.<sup>2</sup> "That was the true

<sup>1</sup> Romans i. 20.

<sup>2</sup> We omit what is said about John the Baptist, as having no necessary connection with the line of thought.

light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." That is, "the universal human reason," the objectifying of the creative idea in the human soul, the creating of man in the image of God, was the light of every soul that cometh into the world. This Divine life in the human soul is the light of that soul. By this light every soul may see itself, see the external world, and see God. But this human world did not see the light of God in its own nature. "It was in *this* world, and *this* world was made by it, and yet *this* world did not know it." Even though God had objectified His thought not only in Nature, but in the human soul,—had created man in His own image,—yet man did not know it, did not see God even in his own soul.

The next step, therefore, is revelation. Men not seeing God with any clearness in Nature or the human soul, John unfolds the process whereby God objectifies His word in human history. He takes a segment of that history and specially guides and directs it. He providentially calls men and inspires them to speak His word, utter His thought to mankind. His word came to men, but they only partly received it. "It came to His own, but His own received it



not." As a whole His chosen people did not receive or understand His word. Some, however, did. Some received His word, and those that did, "to them it gave power to become the sons of God," — "he called them gods unto whom the word of God came,"<sup>1</sup> — and they were born, not of "flesh and blood," but of the very will or spirit of God.

Now comes the final step: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." This is the first direct reference to Christ in this introduction. Up to this point John has been sketching the other ways in which God had realized His great creative idea, — in Nature, in the human soul, and in the providential history of man, — but now he comes to the great matter, to the incarnation of that idea, to its realization in actual human life and character. "The Word was made flesh." This Divine creative idea became a man, — not empirical man but *ideal* man, a perfect realization of God's idea of man. The thought of man in the mind of God, and toward the realization of which He had been moving through all the ages,

<sup>1</sup> John x. 35.

was fully realized in the man Christ Jesus. "The objectifying work of God reached its goal in Him, so that Christ was His absolute, objectified image." This John affirms, for he tells us that "they beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten," or dearly beloved, "of the Father, full of grace and truth." His glory was as great as though he were "the only begotten of the Father;" as though God had never in any other way objectified His word. He was the complete realization of the idea that had moved the heart and hand of God from "the beginning." Toward that goal He had been working, and in that goal was seen the full glory of His great creative thought. "He was full of grace and truth." Others had realized some of God's grace and truth, but in Him that grace and truth were fully realized, "for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."<sup>1</sup>

Thus have we tried to set forth the doctrine taught in this introduction to the Gospel of John. While the object of this introduction is to guard the Church from Gnostic heresies, its form is suggested by the first chapter of Genesis. John has this chapter in mind, and frames his intro-

<sup>1</sup> Colossians ii. 9.



duction after it as a model. He outlines the process of the objectification or realization of the Divine Word or the Divine "world-idea" until it culminates; until it is fully realized in Jesus Christ.

Put for "Word" "the Divine world-idea," and follow the thought of John until it reaches "the Word made flesh," and the doctrine he teaches becomes clear. At first this "world-idea" is in the mind of God, then it comes forth in the material creation, then in the human soul, then in the providential history of man, and finally in the perfected life and character of Jesus the Christ. God's idea of the world, of man and his environment, is fully made known in Christ as the type of perfected humanity. What God has been thinking of from the beginning, and what He will be thinking of until the end, is revealed in Him.

Hence He is the resolving light of all history. He is the centre figure of the world; He is that toward which all history points. He interprets all that has gone before and all that shall come after. For in Him God reveals the sublime truth, that the goal of the universe, the end for which all things exist, is to realize in every soul

the Divine idea, even as it was realized in Christ; to bring all into an oneness with God, even as He was at one with Him.

The doctrine of John therefore is in perfect keeping with that we are teaching. Christ is the objectified Word of God, His Word become man, embodied in a perfect human life; and so Christ is the Representative of God. For "as our Word, being the utterance, is therewith the child (as it were) of our spirit, so the Word of God, being what the Epistle to the Hebrews calls 'the express image of His person' is therewith the Son of God."<sup>1</sup>

#### X. — CHRIST THE IMAGE OF GOD.

As we have said, no writer of the New Testament except John calls Christ "the Word of God." Other writers use the term "image." This seems to be a favorite term with Paul. Paul never applies the term "Word" to Christ. He never calls Jesus "the Logos," but he calls Him "the *Īkōn*," the image of God. His thought, however, is the same. John uses a term which addresses the ear; Paul, one that speaks to the

<sup>1</sup> Gospel of the Divine Life, p. 12.

eye. As Dorner says: "The word 'Logos' is absent in Paul; he uses 'Īkōn' (image). But what a word is to the ear, namely, a revelation of what is within, an 'Īkōn' is to the eye; and thus in the expressions there is only a translation, as it were, of the same fact from one sense to another." That is, what John means by "the Word," Paul means by "the image." A word is a sound picture addressed to the ear; an image is a light picture addressed to the eye. They signify therefore the same thing, that is, the representation of the thought or idea for which they stand.

Hence when Paul calls Christ "the image of God,"<sup>1</sup> or "the image of the invisible God,"<sup>2</sup> he means precisely what John does when he calls Him "the Word of God." He means that Christ was the positive, objectified likeness of God, His perfect representative among men. He does not mean that Christ was God,—for the image of anything cannot be the thing itself,—but he means that He was a perfect picture of God, representing in an actual human life and character the thoughts, feelings, and purposes of God. Paul seems to take his figure from God's cre-

<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians iv. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Colossians i. 15.

ating man in His own image, while John goes farther back and takes His from God's creating the world by His word. As God created man in His own image by nature, so Paul assures us that Christ was in all respects the very image of His Father.

The author of Hebrews (who probably was not Paul) expresses the same idea in a still different term: he calls Christ "The brightness of" God's "glory and the express image of His person;"<sup>1</sup> or as the New Version translates: "The effulgence of His glory and the very image of His substance." Here Christ is called "the image of God;" but the word is not "Īkōn," but "Karaktēr," a much stronger and more expressive word. It is the word from which we derive the term "character." It means "an engraved image," one wrought into or cut out of, as sculpture in marble. Hence Christ is the engraved, developed, sculptured image of God. His character is in the very image of the Divine character. His glory is a reflection of the infinite glory, and His character is the very likeness, — cut, as it were, with an engraver's chisel, — of the real soul and substance of God, — that is,

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews i. 3.

the very heart of the Infinite is revealed in Jesus Christ. Here again is a very strong confirmation of the doctrine we are unfolding: that Christ is not God, but the true Son of God, the living representative, the exact likeness, of the Most High.

## XI. — CHRIST THE ETERNAL LIFE.

Another title is given to Christ, especially by John, that adds something perhaps to the view already presented. He is called "the Life" and "the eternal Life." "I am the way, the truth, and the life."<sup>1</sup> "The Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to His Son to have life in Himself."<sup>2</sup> "God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in His Son."<sup>3</sup> "According to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus."<sup>4</sup> "He that hath the Son, hath life; he that hath not the Son, hath not life."<sup>5</sup> In these passages Christ is called the Life, even the Life eternal. The meaning is that He is the spiritual life, the life of the eternal Spirit. The spirit, the soul of Christ, was alive with the life of God.

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. v. 26.

<sup>3</sup> 1 John v. 11.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Timothy i. 1.

<sup>5</sup> 1 John v. 12.

The word of God in Him was a word of *Power*. The image of God in Him was a living image. It was no lifeless picture, no painting on canvas, no likeness in marble, but a living picture, an image in a real human soul, a likeness of spirit to spirit. The life of Christ was in harmony with the life of God. His heart beat in unison with the great Heart of the universe. His inward, spiritual activities were so charged with the spirit of God that they acted harmoniously among themselves and with the activities of God. He never willed in opposition to the Divine will; "it was His meat and drink to do that will,"<sup>1</sup> and so His spiritual life was constantly fed and sustained with the life of God.

Hence His power to impart life; having life in Himself He can give life. Knowledge of Him and communion with Him impart life to all who thus come to Him. "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."<sup>2</sup> In this knowledge of God in Christ there is life-giving power. It is not only light; it is heat, it is inspiration, inward creative energy. In Christ, therefore, as the objectified word, as the express

<sup>1</sup> John iv. 34.

<sup>2</sup> John xvii. 3.



image, we not only see God, but we feel Him. Our spiritual eye not only beholds a Divine likeness, but our spiritual being feels the influx of a quickening, life-giving energy, and so He becomes to us both "the power of God and the wisdom of God."<sup>1</sup>

From all this, then, the doctrine of the New Testament becomes evident. It is that Christ is not God, but the spoken word, "the express image," the living representative, of God. His nature, which was both human and Divine, like both the nature of God and of man, for they are like each other, was so developed and perfected that He became the realization of God's idea of man, and hence a true and perfect man and therefore a true and perfect child or Son of God, His "absolute objectified image;" and so revealing in His own person, in His own life and character, what God is, what man ought to be, and what man *is* to be: God, Duty, Destiny.

This view reconciles the apparently contradictory statements of Scripture. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."<sup>2</sup> "He that hath seen Me hath

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians i. 24.

<sup>2</sup> John i. 18.



seen the Father.”<sup>1</sup> No man hath seen God in person; but all who see the Son see the Father, because the Son is the absolute image of the Father, — His perfect representative. We see the Father in the Son, — not in person, but in spirit and life.

This view explains also how Christ is one with God. “I am in the Father, and the Father in Me.”<sup>2</sup> “That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they all may be one in us.”<sup>3</sup> “I and My Father are one.”<sup>4</sup> The doctrine we are teaching gives a very clear apprehension of these Scriptures. Christ being the moral likeness, the perfect representative, of God, He is one with Him in spirit, purpose, and life. That the oneness is spiritual and not personal is evident; for the Saviour prays that His disciples may share in the same oneness — “that they may be one even as we are one,”<sup>5</sup> — which could not be if the oneness were that of personality. If Christ and God were absolutely one person, then the disciples could not possibly partake of the same oneness. But Christ being the image of God, His glorified Son, is at one with Him in

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. xvii. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. x. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. xvii. 22.

spirit and purpose, in thought, feeling, and life ; and of this oneness the disciples might partake, and it was of vast importance that they should partake. Hence the earnestness of the Saviour's prayer : "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they all may be one in us."

But, still further, in the light of this truth that Christ is the perfect moral likeness of God and so His representative, that noted passage in Philippians becomes plain : "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus : who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Philippians ii. 5-11 (New Version).

Here Paul teaches his favorite doctrine that Christ is the image of God: "Who being in the form of God," that is, in His potential likeness; in His likeness though not yet realized. This is the first thing stated in this passage, that Christ is in the form or image of God. But being in the form or image of God, He does not at once and off-hand grasp as a prize, or "eagerly seize," that equality or likeness<sup>1</sup> to God which belongs to Him; but He first takes on Himself the "form of a servant" and "becomes obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." "Wherefore," because He thus humbles Himself, God exalts Him and gives Him "a name that is above every name," that all should at last confess that name "to the glory of God the Father."

That is, Christ attains His exaltation through humiliation; "He is perfected through suffering."<sup>2</sup> He does not at the outset realize His perfect spiritual equality or likeness to God; but He attains to this realization gradually and through much service, trial, and suffering. Paul teaches the same doctrine here as elsewhere,

<sup>1</sup> "Isos" may properly be translated "like."

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews ii. 10.

— that Christ is the image of God ; but he also unfolds the process through which that image is realized. It was realized, developed, made manifest and potent through a process of painful experience, such as belongs to the common lot of man. Through the human sphere of toil and service and suffering Christ realized His own likeness to the Father.

## XII. — CHRIST THE REVELATION OF GOD.

From these teachings we pass readily to an apprehension of Christ as the revelation of God. Being a sound and light picture of God, the actual, living Word or image of God, the manifestation of the Divine Life, we hear and see and feel the Father in the Son. Through Him the Father addresses and comes into communion with all our spiritual senses, — eye, ear, and hand. In Him we see the character of God, hear the voice of God, and feel the love of God.

We must remember that Christianity was first of all a Life. It was not a science, not a philosophy, not a cultus : it was a Life, it was Jesus Christ *living* among men. His life was

and is the gospel. He taught truth, but only the truth that was in Him. He taught nothing foreign to Himself; He simply uttered what was in His own soul, spoke the living Word which He was. His teachings were but the outflow of His life. He taught as He lived, spontaneously, from His inward consciousness of God.

Hence all He said, all He did, and all He suffered have profound significance, are of priceless value. They stand for the hidden glory of the Eternal. They reveal the inwardness of the Almighty. They lay open the heart of the Universe. They make known the nature of that Power "in which we live and move and have our being." Christ was a revelation of God. There are other revelations. God reveals Himself in Nature, in the human soul, and in the providential history of man. Christ is not unique in that He reveals God, for in some way all things reveal Him; but He is unique in the way in which He reveals Him. Christ reveals God in Himself, in His own life. The peculiarity of Christianity is, that it is a revelation of God in a person, in an actual life and character. Christ lived the Divine thought and will, and so

realized that thought and will in the world, among men. He lived the Spirit that created and animates the universe, and so is an absolute manifestation of that Spirit.

Therefore the measureless significance of His life. It stands for the great reality, the everlasting heart and core of things. When we look at Christ, behold His life, we see the Spirit that rules and fills and sways the universe. The heart of creation is seen in His life. Nature shows us the garments of the Almighty, the material symbols in which He hides His power; but Christ reveals the Almighty, the absolute Beauty and the absolute Good. Everything in the life of Christ, therefore, has a Divine significance. It points to a glory that lies behind. It indicates a goodness and a power that has no limits. It photographs the perfection of the Infinite. His thoughts are the thoughts of God. His words are the words of the voiceless Spirit. His will is the will of the Absolute. His teachings are the teachings of Him "who is through all, above all, and in us all."

His miracles have something more than an evidential power; they have a spiritual meaning. They are a "transactional" revelation, a revela-



tion in deed. In them Christ acted out the Spirit that animates the universe. They manifest the all-healing, elevating, and redeeming love of God. The saving grace of the Most High is displayed in His marvellous works. He not only taught the love of God, He showed that love in His deeds, He acted it out in healing the sick and raising the dead, in causing the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, and the dead to live.

His sufferings and death are also a revelation. They show us the self-sacrificing element in the Divine love. They reveal to us the nature of that love,—that it is a love that dies to save; that finds its own life in doing and giving, in sacrificing for the life of others, in going out of itself to create and save and bless. “But God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”<sup>1</sup> Christ’s death was a revelation or manifestation of the love of God to a sinful world. His death, therefore, was something more than that of a martyr. He did not die *merely* as a martyr to the truth. He did die as a martyr. In His death He bore witness to the truth, “for He was

<sup>1</sup> Romans v. 8.



obedient unto death, even the death of the cross ;” but this does not exhaust the meaning of His death. His death means more than this ; He died as a representative of God. His death was an object lesson, drawn by the hand of the Infinite Love. The loving heart of the Infinite was revealed in His death. In that agony in the garden and in that tragedy on Calvary, we see something of the depth and power of the Father’s love for His children. We see how that love gives and sacrifices for the beings loved. His death, therefore, was not only the death of a martyr, but it was also a conscious yielding up of life, that the wondrous love of God might be manifested to a sinful world, to the end that that world might be saved.

His resurrection is also a revelation. Like everything else, it has two sides to it, an outward and an inward, and the outward is a revelation of the inward. It not only revealed the continuous life of the Spirit, but also the indwelling life of God, that is raising man to a higher and still higher life. So Christ in all He was, did, and suffered is a revelation of God. The whole gospel is in His life. In Him Christianity existed actually and therefore potentially.

The gospel in the world to-day was first in Christ, and out of Him it has been developed. Thus Christ, being the representative of God, His "absolute objectified image," is a revelation of God in such a way that in seeing the Son we see the very heart of the Father, His inward spirit, life, and glory.

### XIII. — CHRIST THE EXAMPLE AND DESTINY OF MAN.

But Christ is not only the revelation of God. He is also the example of man, and therefore a type of what man ought to be and is to be. That Christ is our example, the Scriptures clearly teach. The Saviour's constant exhortation is, "Follow Me," and the teaching of the Apostles, "Seek to be 'conformed unto His image,'<sup>1</sup> to attain unto a perfect man, 'unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,'<sup>2</sup> to be 'changed into His image from glory to glory;'"<sup>3</sup> and Peter tells us expressly that "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps."<sup>4</sup> Christ,

<sup>1</sup> Romans viii. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Ephesians iv. 13.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Corinthians iii. 18.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Peter ii. 21.

then, is our example. He shows us what we ought to do and be. We ought to be like Him; we ought to live as He lived. Not only in His teachings, but in His own life and character, He sets before us our duty. What we are to be and do is made known not only by Him, but *in* Him. We are to take Him as our example, and follow Him, imitate Him, make His life the ideal and the inspiration of our lives.

But we are not to regard Him as our example in any stiff, formal, perfunctory way. He is not to be thought of as "busying himself," while on earth, "in setting an example." We are not to think of Him as some superior being, living among men merely to show them how they ought to live. He was not "acting a part" in the great drama of life. Far from it. He lived out spontaneously the life that was in Him. What He appeared to be, He was. His deeds were but the outflow of His spirit. In Him the ideal and the real were one. He realized in Himself the ideal life of man, not in a formal, unnatural way, but in a perfectly natural, real way. He was not another order of being, acting in human dress for man's enlightenment, but He was a man, living a manly life among men,

and so showing them the life they ought to live.

It follows that we are to be no formal imitators of Christ; that we are not to follow Him in the letter. We are under no obligations to do the same things that He did. He washed His disciples' feet; we are not therefore to wash each other's feet. That is "the letter that killeth." We are to follow Him in the spirit. His life was not a machine life, but a spiritual life, a life of intelligence and freedom. It is not our duty, therefore, to do just what He did, but to do whatever we do in His spirit, under the inspiration of His light and life, and so grow characters that shall be like His.

The ground of this duty is evident. Christ being like us in nature, we can be like Him in character. His character being the result of developing harmoniously and perfectly a nature that is like ours, we can so develop our natures that our character will be like His. The possibility of our developing a Christlike character, and so of Christ being our example, lies in the fact that His nature and ours are essentially the same. Were they not, were they radically different, we could not develop characters like

His, and He could not be our example. Were He of another and higher order of beings, He could not be our example; for we could not live His life. To be our example, He must belong to our order; He must be a member of the human family. He is our example, then, because His nature is like ours. He is like us in nature; therefore we can become like Him in character. He has realized the Divine idea of man; therefore we can realize that idea; we can become real, true men, even as He was “the *man* Christ Jesus.”

Consequently Christ is a revelation of man, not only to man but of man. He reveals man to himself; He shows him the possibilities of his own nature; He shows man what he can be. He can be Divine, he can be Godlike even as Christ was; he can realize the Divine ideal in his own life. Every soul can be what God designed him to be. He can be a true child of God, a child of God in the likeness of moral character, a perfect man in Christ Jesus. All this Christ reveals of man in the fact that He is our example.

But Christ is not only man's example, He is man's destiny. In Himself, in His own life and

character, He reveals what man is to be. He realized God's idea of man, therefore He shows in Himself what man's destiny is. "When He shall appear, we shall be like Him."<sup>1</sup> "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren."<sup>2</sup> To be like Christ, to be "conformed to His image," is the destiny of man. Man reaches his destiny, achieves the goal of his being when he lives the life of Christ, and just in proportion as he lives that life. Just to the degree a man lives the Christian life, just to that degree does he realize his own destiny; and when he attains unto the fulness of that life, he will attain unto the fulness of that destiny which God designed for him.

In Christ, therefore, heaven is revealed. He shows us what constitutes heaven. He eliminates from the world's thought all materialistic notions of heaven by giving it — heaven in the concrete — in an actual life. Heaven is not a place, but a Divine life, a Christlike character. We go to heaven, not by dying, but by living, — by living the "Life Eternal." As we have His life,

<sup>1</sup> 1 John iii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Romans viii. 29.



we have heaven; and we shall never have heaven in all of its fulness until we have the fulness and completeness of His life.

We see, therefore, something of the greatness and grandeur of the revelation which Christ makes. He reveals God, duty, destiny. In Himself He shows us "our Father;" what we ought to be, and what we are to be. He is at once the image of God, the example of man, and the type of man's destiny. What God is in His inward life, and what man is in his native possibilities and ideal perfection, shine in radiant glory from the face of Jesus the Christ.

#### XIV. — CHRIST THE PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING.

The doctrine of the office of Christ lies between that of His person and His work. It marks the transition from the doctrine of Christ to the doctrine of salvation. Having considered the person of Christ, the next step is to consider His office, which naturally leads forward to His work. After the doctrine of His person comes naturally the doctrine of His office. His official character bears a close relation to His personal character; hence our work would hardly seem complete without some notice of His office. A



brief word concerning His office, therefore, will close our labor.

Under the head of the title of this book we showed that the term "Christ" signified, in the beginning at least, the office rather than the person of the Master. But we showed also that this distinction between the office and the person is really one of convenience rather than of anything else; that it exists in thought rather than in fact. This is a point that needs to be emphasized. We need to see clearly that Christ's office is not one thing and His person another; that in His official character He is not something radically different from what He is in His personal character. His person really is His office. What He *is* constitutes what He *does*. His private life is His public life. His official character flows out naturally and spontaneously from His personal character. When He became the Christ of God, when He realized the Divine idea, when He had developed His own individual consciousness of God, and felt Himself to be at one with the Father, He became the Saviour of the world,<sup>1</sup> the prophet, priest, and

<sup>1</sup> The work of Christ in the salvation of the world will be considered in another volume of this series. — EDITOR.

king of men. He is the "power of God unto salvation," because in and of Himself He is the love, the wisdom, and the power of God. The saving life that He diffuses is only the saving life that He is. The truth that He teaches is nothing more than the truth that He is. His redeeming grace is only the wondrous love that His own soul has realized and made His own. We are not, then, to think of the office of Christ as something distinct from Himself. We are not to separate the office and the person in any such way as to make the office a mere function or performance of the person. He saves the world by what He is, not by what He does; hence we are to think of Him as our personal, not merely as our official, Saviour. In fine, we are to think of His office, not as something added to Him or conferred upon Him, but as something inhering in Him, in His very life and character, as the embodiment and outflow of His own personal Divine consciousness. Because of His own consciousness of God, God was in Him "reconciling the world unto Himself."

It is therefore only for convenience or for the purposes of thought, of better apprehension and clearer view, that we treat of the official charac-

ter of Christ as something separate from His personal character. We speak of His office to make clear His work. In fact, the office of Christ is the relation He bears to human needs. When we speak of the office of Christ we speak of the relation He bears to the conscious needs of mankind; it is merely Christ viewed from the standpoint of what man needs and of what Christ does for him. His official character is His personal character in its adaptedness to the different states of human consciousness. We are conscious of certain moral and spiritual needs. Christ in His own life meets and satisfies those needs. Hence in His work of meeting and satisfying those needs, we see Him in His official character; we see His office in His work in and for man.

The whole work of Christ may be expressed in one word, "at-one-ment." His work is to bring man into at-one-ment with God, to reconcile the children unto the Father, and grow them into a permanent oneness with Him. Christ was in perfect agreement, harmony, oneness with God; and to bring man into the same oneness constitutes His work. We treat this work under different forms, call it by different names, but it is

all included in this oneness with God. To bring man into this oneness, to make him one with God in spirit, purpose, and life, is the whole work of Christ. His office, therefore, is His way or method of doing this work. His official character is seen in His method of at-one-ing man with God, of drawing the world into this spiritual oneness with the Father.

Now this character is usually divided into that of prophet, priest, and king. In His office, in His work of bringing the world to God, Christ is regarded as holding and exercising this threefold office. But we must guard against absolutely dividing His office, of separating these offices one from another, in such a way that Christ is at one time prophet, at another priest, and at another king. There is really no such division of Christ. Officially He is a unit, as He is personally. His office is one, as His person is one. He is not at one time prophet, at another priest, and at another king,—prophet and priest on earth, and king in heaven,—but He is prophet, priest, and king at once and at all times. All these offices are united in Him and go constantly to make His official character. Indeed, they are but different aspects of the same thing. They

are His office and work viewed from different standpoints. Viewed from one class of human needs, Christ is a prophet; from another He is a priest; from another He is a king. Or, seen in the light of experience, of what we are conscious Christ does for us, He is to us at one time prophet, at another priest, at another king.

When He comes to us as a teacher of truth, as a preacher of righteousness, He is a prophet. We are conscious of our ignorance, of our need of knowledge, of moral and spiritual enlightenment. We feel very keenly the darkness of our souls, the dense clouds that often cover our pathway, and we cry for light. We would know the right, we would have *the way* pointed out; we would know God, duty, and destiny. Hence Christ comes to us as the Light. In this experience, He is to us the prophet of God. He speaks to us the eternal Word and opens to us the everlasting kingdom. He shows us the way of life and salvation. He teaches us concerning those things that make for our peace. He bears to us a message from God, and illuminates our pathway with rays from the "Sun of righteousness." His prophetic office is His teaching office. In

His relation to us in our need of light and knowledge, He is a prophet.

But man is conscious not only of the need of moral light, but also of saving power. He knows himself to be a sinner. He is conscious not only that he is ignorant of God, but that he is alienated from Him; that he is out of harmony with the spirit of the universe; that the real nature of things is against him; that in some way he is down in the valley and unable alone to climb "the evergreen mountains of life." This experience of sin is the widest, deepest, and darkest, as well as the most painful, experience of mankind. Man needs, therefore, a power that can help him in this experience, that can lift him out of his sin, that can reconcile him to God, that can speak for him and go with him to the throne of grace, that can open to him the fountain of mercy, that can lead and bear him back to the Father's house and impart to him the consciousness of restored harmony, renewed favor, and everlasting possibility. Christ, therefore, in His relation to man's consciousness of sin, is a priest. His priestly office is His power to reconcile man to God, to bear in upon the sinner's soul a consciousness of the Father's undying



love, and so bear the sinner back to the Father's house and restore within him the assurance of Divine favor and the courage for future achievement. In His capacity of atoning for human sin by restoring, through faith and repentance, that oneness with God that the sinner has lost, He is a priest. His priestly office is that of "peace-maker," of making peace with God, of reconciling the sinful children to the Father by lifting them out of, or turning them away from, their sin.

But man needs also a king, — some power to rule and reign over him or in him. He needs this in his individual capacity. He needs some one to speak to him with authority and command his obedience. We are all conscious of this need. We all feel the need of some power to reign over us or within us. We are conscious that we are not sufficient for our own government and control; that we need a power enthroned somewhere, in our own souls or out, to which we must bow, and whose voice shall be to us the voice of God. Individually, we all feel the need of a Messiah, one anointed of God to rule our spirits.

But if we are conscious of this need in our individual capacity, much more are we in our



associate capacity. Government has ever been one of the prime necessities of mankind. Men must be governed, or they cannot live together. If communities of human beings are to exist, they must be governed; there must be some rule over them. This is just as true religiously as politically. If men are to associate together religiously, they must be governed; there must be an authority to which all bow, a reigning power which all acknowledge, a power which answers for king. But man is a social being; whatever he does he does in company; to whatever end he lives, he lives in society. Touch his social instinct therefore with religion, and he must have his church, his religious community. He cannot live his religion alone; he must live it in the society of his fellow-men, in communion with kindred souls; he must associate with others in doing his religious work; and this association, this church, must have a head, a reigning power, a ruling spirit.

Not only would there never have been any Christianity without Christ, there never would have been any Christian Church. Christ is as indispensable to the existence of the Church as He is to the existence of the gospel. The Church

grew out of Him and around Him. It is the development of His leadership, the outgrowth of His following. Because men were moved to follow Him as Lord and Master, therefore the Church. His spiritual majesty, His royal leadership in the realm of religion, created the Church.

We must never forget that all we call Christianity existed first potentially in Christ. The Christian Scriptures and the Christian Church were both, first of all, in the life of Jesus. The Scriptures are not the foundation of the Church or of Christianity, but only the record of its beginning.

Destroy the record, therefore, and you do not destroy the Christ. As Dr. Newman Smyth says: "Even if you should break the Bible to pieces, the evidence of the ultimate spiritual personality of Jesus the Christ would not be destroyed. Break the glass to pieces, and you will not rid yourself of the evidence of the sun which shone in it; still every fragment and bit of glass at your feet will throw its beam of light up into your eye."<sup>1</sup> The Church is a living witness to the reality of Christ which no broken Bible could destroy. Christ's personal reign in the hearts

<sup>1</sup> Reality of Faith, p. 40.

of men, drawing them into communion with Himself and building them into the temple of the Lord, is an everlasting testimony to His past history and present glory. The Church, as a creation of His royal presence, becomes a witness of that presence; for without Christ there could have been no Church, since there would have been no power to create and govern it.

Thus is Christ prophet, priest, and king in His answer to the conscious needs of mankind. He is prophet in His teaching office, priest in His saving energy, and king in His reigning power. He meets man's conscious need of light, of help, and of authority, and all this in His own personality. In what He is, as "the Son of man and the Son of God," He is prophet, priest, and king. These terms only set before us the one work which He does, — the leading and drawing and educating man into His own oneness with God; and this work He does by realizing in His own life the Divine truth, the Divine way, and the Divine life.

It is to be observed, however, that we are dealing here with analogies, not with identities. This has been implied in all we have said, but it needs to be made explicit. Christ is analo-

gous to the world's prophets, priests, and kings, but He is not absolutely like any of them. Between Him and them there is a resemblance, but no exact similarity. The world never saw a prophet, priest, or king, who was exactly like Christ. Only in some respects does the likeness hold, and the contrast is always much greater than the comparison.

Surely no one will contend that Christ is really like any of the kings of this world. He is not like an earthly monarch except in the mere fact that He reigns. In all other respects He contrasts with this world's rulers. They rule the world without, He rules the world within; they control the hands, He controls the heart; they rule by force, He rules by love; they compel obedience, He wins obedience; they reign by virtue of their office, He reigns by virtue of what He is; their power lies in armed legions, His power lies in His own personality, in the grace and magnetism of His own life and character, in His own Divine manhood.

Equally clear is it that no prophet of the world was ever just like Christ. Doubtless Christ was more like the Hebrew prophet than any other character in the world's history. He spoke from

God to man and preached the everlasting righteousness, even as the prophets of Israel and Judah. He confesses to the possession and exercise of the prophetic office: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."<sup>1</sup>

The Hebrew prophet, however, was no exact prototype of Christ; he resembled Christ only in the fact that he uttered the voice of God to man. In the form, manner, and largely in the contents of his teaching, he differed widely from the Son of man. The prophet spoke strongly, often fiercely; Christ, with the calmness and sweetness of assured truth and conscious power "of one having authority." The prophet spoke in the superlative degree; Christ seldom, if ever, left the positive. The one spoke as he was moved by the Holy Spirit; the other out of the spirit of holiness that filled His own soul. The one uttered the Word of God as it *came* to him; the other uttered the Word of God that was *in*

<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 18, 19.

Him. The one appealed to an objective law, the other to the subjective law of His own oneness with God. The one said, "Keep the law, and thou shalt have peace;" the other said, "Come unto *Me*, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." All the teaching of Christ was really about Christ, the unfolding of His oneness with the Father, and the way of that oneness for man. His life was His sermon. Out of the great realities He saw and felt in Himself, He spoke. Christ "saw all things. He pierced to the meaning of this world; He understood day and night; He looked into the heart of the age; He knew the secret of history; He entered into the depths of humanity and knew life and man; He saw all things and Himself in God, and God in all; and out of such a union sprang the spontaneous conviction of Eternal Life as the key to all and the end of all."<sup>1</sup> The prophetic office of Christ, therefore, is unique. In a large sense He was a prophet not after the manner of men.

But as a priest Christ is supposed to come into close relation with the priests of men. The Hebrew priest is thought to be the special archetype of Christ. The priestly office of Christ is thought

<sup>1</sup> Munger's Appeal to Life, pp. 303, 304.



to be a lineal descendant of the priestly office under the law. He, as priest, sacrificed Himself, thereby satisfying the legal requirements of God, largely in the same way as the sacrifices offered by the priests of the old dispensation. It is a curious fact, however, that Christ never calls Himself a priest, and is never so called by any writer of the New Testament, except the author of Hebrews. As Martineau says: "It deserves notice, that, unless as the name of His enemies, the word "priest" never occurs either in the historical or epistolary writings of the New Testament, except in the Epistle to the Hebrews."<sup>1</sup> In Hebrews Christ is professedly compared to the Jewish high-priest, but the comparison turns out to be almost a contrast. Christ is nearly everything that the high-priest is not. The high-priest is in the hereditary line; Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedeck, "without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life."<sup>2</sup> The high-priest offers other things; Christ offers Himself. The one sacrificed once every year; the other once for all. The high-priest entered the holy place yearly for a short time; Christ entered

<sup>1</sup> Studies of Christianity, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews vii. 3.



the heavenly home forever. In fine, the priesthood of the one is outward, external, ceremonial, temporal; that of the other, inward, spiritual, real, and eternal. The foundation for the priestly office of Christ, therefore, is slight. As compared with the priests of the law, He is one in little more than in name. The analogy between Him and the Jewish high-priest is anything but apparent. It was evidently seized upon by the author of Hebrews in order to commend the gospel to the Hebrew Christians. It has little foundation in fact.

All that can be claimed for it is that the benefit the Hebrew people received from their high-priest was something like the benefit the sinner receives from Christ. As the high-priest restored or proclaimed once a year the legal or ceremonial at-one-ment between God and His people, so Christ brings back the lost harmony between God and the sinner. So far as this the analogy may extend; farther it does not. If we look to it to teach us *how* Christ restores this harmony, we shall look in vain or be misled. No study of the Hebrew priesthood can aid us much in solving the problem of the atonement. Christ is a priest in such a radically different

sense from any priest under the law, that no study of the legal priesthood can lead us into a right apprehension of the free, spiritual priesthood of Christ. Christ is an inward, spiritual priest; therefore He cannot help man by any external, legal sacrifice, but only by a sacrifice of the spirit. Schleiermacher, in our opinion, grasps the real heart of the matter when he attributes the redemptive force in Christ to His world-wide and world-deep sympathy. His doctrine, as stated by Dorner, is that "Christ's suffering proper consisted in this, that His outer suffering, caused by sinners, presented to Him as in a mirror the depth and extent of sin, and stirred His sympathy in the most powerful way. . . . This *sympathy* constitutes Christ's proper high-priestly action, in distinction from His prophetic and kingly office. It has the power of drawing us into the communion of Christ's holiness and blessedness after He, by His sympathy, had let Himself be drawn into communion with us." Here is the key to the atoning work of Christ. The author of Hebrews intimates it when he says: "For we have not a high-priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points

tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”<sup>1</sup> The suffering sympathy of Christ is the power that saves the sinner. His physical sufferings have no efficacy except as they manifest His love. In and of themselves they can affect neither God nor man.

Thus we see in what sense Christ is prophet, priest, and king. These terms are helpful analogues of His official character. They do not set forth the exact truth in any of these relations, but they stand around Him like so many mirrors, each reflecting something of His glory.

#### CONCLUSION.

This, then, is the conclusion of this little study of Jesus the Christ: that He is both the “Son of God” and “Son of man;” that He is at one with both God and man in nature, and at one with God in character, and so the absolute Word, the “express image” of God, the Divine Life realized among men, and hence a perfect revelation of God’s thought concerning man. What God is, and what He would have man do and be, and what He has purposed man shall do and be,

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews iv. 15.

are all made known in Christ. He is the absolute Divinity, not in personality or infinity, but in moral likeness, and so the absolute duty and the absolute destiny, and, by virtue of this fact, the royal light and redeeming love, of the world.

Consequently His is the absolute religion. There is no going beyond Him, and there is no "climbing up some other way." All other religions are tentative; His is the absolute truth, way, life. We come to our destiny only through a moral likeness to Him. Not by "the light of Nature" or of "conscience" do we reach the goal, but by the light that shines evermore in the face of Jesus Christ. In some world His light and His love must enlighten our minds and purify our hearts before we can realize that Divine manhood which God has determined shall be ours. We must "conform to His image" before we can realize our destiny.

It becomes us then to begin that conformation *now*. As intelligent beings, living in the midst of this Christian day, it becomes us to take Christ as our Way, our Truth, and our Life. Some day we must do this, and now is the best time. "Now is the accepted time," and always

will be *now* until we do the will of God in "conforming to the image of His Son." As individuals this is our duty. As individuals it is supreme wisdom and supreme goodness to take Christ as our present, personal Saviour.

As a Church this is equally true. We can really live only by building our Church on Christ. "The Church of the future," no less than that of the past, must be built on the Rock. If it is to be a power in bringing men into oneness with God, it must bring them into oneness with Christ, root them into the great reality of His consciousness, and bind them to His personality. If this brief and imperfect development of the doctrine of Christ shall lead any one to see and feel Him to be his own personal Saviour, and if it shall help make the Church in any degree more truly Christian, the author will rejoice in the fruit of his labor.







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